

Corunna City Council
And
Corunna Downtown Development Authority
Joint Meeting
Monday, October 25, 1999

Present: Weaver, Bayless, Bendall, Dumond, Ockerman, Runyan.

Absent: Hornus (arrived at 7:20 p.m.).

Guests: Lisa Hitchcock, City Manager; Tim Crawford, Superintendent of Public Works; Bill Constine, The Independent; Jim Stechschulte; Jackie Leone, The Argus Press; Larry LeCureux; Jack Gerhold; Bill Lulham; Bill Striggow; Bill Graham; Dave Stechschulte; Dr. James Billis; Sandy Yerian; Carol Vaughn; Arnold Dunchock; Marvin Schultz; Scott Cook, Capital Consultants; Officer Kevin Clark, Police Department; Don Runyon; Jeff Bemus; Clark Long; Tanya Forrester, Old Kent Bank; and other concerned citizens.

The meeting was called to order in the City Council Chambers by Mayor Weaver at 7:00 p.m.

CALL TO AUDIENCE – CITIZEN IN-PUT TO THE CITY COUNCIL: Bill Lulham stated that he advised council at the last council meeting that a survey was done several years ago about making Mack Street a one-way street. He further stated that he felt making Mack Street a one-way street for one block was expensive and would not help the cause. He suggested installing a right turn only sign. It would be cheaper than trying to redo the whole block.

Don Runyon stated that he has lived in Flint and has been to Owosso and both cities have done away with most of their one-way streets because they are a hassle and a pain in the ass. He further stated that if the businesses do not want the street work done and the city does then the businesses should not have to pay for the work. He also stated that he lives north of the bridge and asked what would be done for fire and police protection when the bridge work is done. Councilperson Ockerman advised that the fire department would have equipment on both sides of the river. Councilperson Dumond advised that the same thing would happen with the ambulance service. Mayor Weaver advised that the fire, ambulance and police protection issue would be addressed at a later time.

STREETSCAPE HISTORY: Bill Graham advised that the streetscape history goes back to the beginning of the Downtown Development Authority. The Downtown Development Authority was formed by a city council resolution in January of 1988. The city applied and received a \$250,000 HUD grant, which was to be used to hire a developer to rebuild the downtown block that was destroyed by fire. This did not happen. In November 1991, the Downtown Development Authority assumed the development role and built the city centre. At that time, the city's planners came up with a list of proposed amendments for the Downtown Development Authority and a tax income-financing plan. One amendment was to set a schedule of different improvements that would be done to the downtown area. Mr. Graham stated that in July 1997 the city council and the Downtown Development Authority sent letters to the Michigan Department of Transportation and to the state representatives

asking for help with M-71 because of its deterioration. The Downtown Development Authority authorized Capital Consultants to do a preliminary streetscape design. He further stated that committee meetings were held to discuss the park benches, decorative paving, lighting, trash containers, and utilities. He also stated that in January 1999 a joint meeting was held with Capital Consultants and the Michigan Department of Transportation to discuss parking problems, Mack Street one way options, left turn lane and signal, and changing the street from four lanes to three. Mr. Graham advised that in February 1999 the city and Downtown Development Authority applied for a grant with the State of Michigan. The Downtown Development Authority announced in April that the project would be funded partially with property assessments to the affected business owners. He further advised that the initial cost estimates were provided to the Downtown Development Authority and in October the State of Michigan presented a ceremonial check to the Downtown Development Authority.

MACK STREET ONE WAY OPTIONS: Ms. Hitchcock advised there were concerns early on in the streetscape project that Mack Street was a dangerous intersection. She explained the Mack Street options pros and cons. She advised that the proposed changes would increase safety, double the parking capacity, improve the look of the downtown, redirect traffic to Corunna Avenue and would improve the post office drop box location. She further advised that a traffic count was just completed and it showed that 5,000 cars per day are driven from the 100 block of Mack Street to Corunna Avenue. Scott Cook from Capital Consultants explained the reasons for making Mack Street a one-way street. Councilperson Ockerman asked Mr. Cook to explain what would happen when a left-hand turn was to be made from eastbound and westbound Corunna Avenue. Mr. Cook advised that a left turn only lane would be developed in both directions on Shiawassee Street and on Corunna Avenue. The through traffic would not be impeded. Councilperson Ockerman asked if the left turn lane would accommodate two or three cars. Mr. Cook advised yes. Francis Spaniola advised the Downtown Development Authority voted months ago to do a study on how changing Mack Street to a one-way street would impact the area, but it has not been done yet. He further advised that it would be hard to make an educated decision without a professional study. Mr. Spaniola asked how long a study would take. Mr. Cook advised that he was not sure because he was not a traffic engineer, but a traffic pattern was done to see what would happen when the street was made one-way. Mr. Spaniola asked what it would cost to change the street back if the city finds out that the one-way street would not work. Mr. Cook advised approximately \$75,000. Bill Graham asked if there would be a left turn signal on Corunna Avenue as there will be on Shiawassee Street. Mr. Cook advised that he did not know and would contact Ms. Hitchcock with an answer. Mayor Weaver advised that the state will do their project whether the streetscape project is done or not. He further advised the city would like to coordinate both projects together. Sandie Yerian stated the downtown businesses could not afford to have the downtown area torn up for two years. She further stated the work needs to be done in one year. Councilperson Dumond advised the construction would not only affect the businesses downtown but also the businesses north of the river as well. Councilperson Runyan asked if the parking lot behind city hall was filled to capacity. Ms. Hitchcock advised no. Mr. Spaniola stated he had some questions regarding the financial impact for persons who will be assessed on Mack Street. Mayor Weaver advised finances would be covered in the next business item.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW: Mayor Weaver explained the proposed costs and graphs to the members of council and the Downtown Development Authority members. Mayor Weaver advised the participating costs were funded 80 percent by the federal government and 20 percent by the state or local community. He further advised the state would be picking up the city's 20 percent. He also advised 100 percent of the non-participating costs would be the responsibility of the city. Mayor Weaver explained the property owners would pay the sidewalk and decorative paving costs that are associated with the streetscape project through special assessment. He further explained there are 5,000 lineal feet of sidewalk that are included in the streetscape project and the cost per lineal foot is \$46.60. He also explained that the amount the city would assess the property owners would be \$34.95 per lineal foot, which is 75 percent of the actual costs. Mayor Weaver advised that if the decorative paving were eliminated from the project the assessment costs would be \$18.15 per lineal foot. Bill Graham asked if the sidewalks would be ten feet wide. Ms. Hitchcock advised the sidewalks would be different on each side of the street. Scott Cook explained that the sidewalk on the west side would be wider for a portion. The standard width of a sidewalk is five feet. Marvin Schultz stated that trucks have difficulty making turns at Corunna Avenue and asked if they would still have difficulty if Corunna Avenue west of the light is made narrower. Mr. Cook advised the engineers hired by the Michigan Department of Transportation have moved the intersection over to allow a truck to have more room to turn. Dave Stechschulte stated he has installed new sidewalk on Corunna Avenue and asked if it would have to be torn up. Mr. Cook advised yes. Mr. Stechschulte asked if the sidewalk would be replaced at the same depth. Mr. Cook advised yes. Mr. Spaniola advised that his main concern was with the residential property assessments. They get hit hard and he asked if anything could be done for them. Ms. Hitchcock advised the residential properties would only be assessed for a five foot sidewalk. Dr. Billis asked if there had been any consideration about not assessing residential property owners. Ms. Hitchcock advised no, but the decision would be made by the city council or the Downtown Development Authority could choose to pick up the costs. She further advised it would not be her recommendation to not assess the residential property owners because then all of the property owners would end up paying for the sidewalk replacement. Councilperson Bendall asked if the assessment would be for one year. Ms. Hitchcock advised no, the assessment could be spread out the length of the bonding period. Councilperson Runyan stated he had a concern with replacing a person's sidewalk that is in good shape and does not need repair. Mayor Weaver advised the width of the new sidewalks have to be five foot because of the American Disabilities Act standards. He further advised the street elevations might be different than they are right now and the sidewalks would have to be modified to meet the elevations.

CONSIDERATION: RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES, ALLEY IMPROVEMENTS, DDA

PARTICIPATION, ENGINEERING COSTS: Mayor Weaver stated it was his understanding there are three residential properties involved with the streetscape project. Ms. Hitchcock advised that was correct. The homes affected are located on east and west Mack Street. Mayor Weaver advised there are two alley improvements that could be part of the streetscape project. Ms. Hitchcock advised the two alleys could be added to the project. She further advised that Tim Crawford has received an estimate for a two-inch cap for the alley located between State Street and McArthur Street. Dave Stechschulte advised he was concerned about the alley located behind the Town Tub. When Shiawassee Street is block

off during the construction people, including his customers, will use the alley to get to the courthouse and to his business. Mayor Weaver advised it appeared that alley improvements was an issue that council would have to look at. He further advised the residential property assessment was another issue that would have to be decided by city council. He also advised the engineering cost for the streetscape project was another issue that needed to be addressed. Francis Spaniola asked if the inclusion of Mack Street was a Downtown Development Authority or a council decision. Ms. Hitchcock advised the Downtown Development Authority brought the issue to council. She further advised that council would make the decision on funding if the Downtown Development Authority does not participate. If the Downtown Development Authority does not want to fund the project, then council would decide how to fund the project. Mr. Spaniola advised that was not what he heard two or three weeks ago. He heard the city would proceed with the project regardless of what the Downtown Development Authority did. He further advised it now appears the city wants to know if the Downtown Development Authority will be involved in the project. Ms. Hitchcock advised yes. Mr. Spaniola advised there are a number of issues that came up during the last two weeks that created a problem with trying to be fiscally responsible. He further advised the Downtown Development Authority would participate in the project and participate well. Mr. Spaniola stated he was concerned with the loss of one of the City Centre's renters and the possibility that changes to the building would have to be done. He further stated he would like to see what the projections are in terms on what the Downtown Development Authority can do before a decision is made. Dr. Billis read excerpts from the Downtown Development Authority's minutes. Councilperson Dumond asked if the Downtown Development Authority could spread out their costs as suggested for the residential customers. Mayor Weaver advised yes.

CALL TO AUDIENCE – CITIZEN IN-PUT: Arnold Dunchock stated he was under the impression a decision was going to be made today regarding the assessments. He asked how many more meetings a person has to attend before a decision is made. Mr. Dunchock stated he is getting the impression a decision has been made when one has not been made. Mayor Weaver advised he did not have a direct answer. He further advised council and the Downtown Development Authority could make a motion if they desired to do so. He also advised a decision would have to be made shortly. Ms. Hitchcock stated she had hoped to get some type of direction from the meeting on how to assess the costs associated with the project. Councilperson Ockerman stated he agreed with Mr. Dunchock a decision should be made and suggested council take some type of positive action. Jim Stechschulte stated he had a serious problem with how he will be assessed. He advised he replaced sidewalks and curbing three years ago and was still paying for them. He further advised now he is being told he would be billed again after his federal tax dollars pay 80 percent of the project. Mr. Stechschulte suggested bonding the project and paying for it at large. Ms. Hitchcock advised that was something that council could address at a later time. Mr. Stechschulte stated the city could not legally assess property that is already being paid for by federal grant money. Ms. Hitchcock advised that was correct. Councilperson Bendall asked what the federal grant money was paying for. Ms. Hitchcock advised the sidewalk replacement costs were included in the participating cost figures. Ms. Hitchcock suggested to Mr. Stechschulte that he contact the Owosso city manager regarding the issue since he was a member of the city council because she did speak to Mr. Guetschow about it. Mr. Stechschulte asked what made the cost go up from \$29 to \$34. Mayor Weaver advised the

original cost was changed from \$37.61 to \$34.95. Bill Striggow stated that it was mentioned that the cost to remove the curbs if the one-way street does not work out is \$75,000 and there was no way that Capital Consultants would do the work for that price. He further stated the parking lot behind city hall has not been addressed at all and suggested including the parking lot in the construction plans. He also stated that if lighting was placed in the parking lot it would be a violation of the city ordinance. Ms. Hitchcock asked what lighting he was referring to. Mr. Striggow advised car lighting. He asked if there was any assurance that there would be a left turn arrow placed on Corunna Avenue. Ms. Hitchcock advised that issue was addressed earlier and she would get an answer. Mr. Striggow advised he heard someone say that sidewalk funds would come out of the General Fund. He asked if there was a sidewalk line item. Ms. Hitchcock advised no, it was a department of the General Fund. Mr. Cook explained the \$75,000 estimate he quoted to put Mack Street back to a two-way street did not include engineering fees. Councilperson Ockerman asked what the engineering costs would be. Mr. Cook advised that he would contact Ms. Hitchcock with an answer. Mr. Striggow stated that making Mack Street a right turn only would be acceptable while a one-way street would not. Bill Lulham asked how the one-way street would affect the fire department parking. Ms. Hitchcock advised they could park along the south side of the building and in the back parking lot. Councilperson Dumond advised that council has considered asking the fire department to park in the back parking lot. Councilperson Ockerman stated the fire department should park in the back parking lot. Dr. Billis read additional excerpts from the Downtown Development Authority minutes. He stated the Downtown Development Authority, as well as Ms. Hitchcock and Mayor Weaver, have been asking for a left turn phase signal at Corunna Avenue. He further stated he explained to representatives from the Michigan Department of Transportation that he wanted written verification from the state there will be a left turn signal at the corner. He asked Ms. Hitchcock if she had received verbal communication that the light would be installed. Ms. Hitchcock advised yes. Dr. Billis advised the state is aware he wants written verification, which has not been received. He further advised he would not support the project without a left turn signal. It would be a 4.2 million-dollar mistake. Dr. Billis stated it was time to communicate to the state that written verification was needed and it might be time to involve our state representative. Councilperson Dumond asked Mr. Cook if a final draft of the project would be forthcoming from the state that would indicate if a left turn signal would be installed. Mr. Cook advised yes. Mayor Weaver advised the city has been verbally assured there will be a left turn signal at Corunna Avenue and asked Mr. Cook if he has seen a final layout. Mr. Cook advised no, but the engineering firm for the state has indicated there will be a left turn light at that corner. Mr. Spaniola asked if Representative Julian and Senator Rogers were aware the left turn signal was critical. Mayor Weaver advised he had personally contacted them and was assured they would be willing to go into action on behalf of the city. Councilperson Bendall asked if the city has received verbal confirmation from the state the light will be installed. Ms. Hitchcock advised yes, the state has been very supportive in the project. Councilperson Ockerman stated he was comfortable with the verification that has been received but it appeared it was an issue with the Downtown Development Authority and it needs to be resolved. Larry LeCureux advised he was almost hit twice while crossing Shiawassee Street. Mayor Weaver asked if he was crossing at Mack Street. Mr. LeCureux advised no, he was crossing at McArthur Street. Dumond moved, Ockerman seconded to look at assessing property owners \$18.15 who do not have decorative paving and \$34.95 to property owners who do have decorative paving and to

direct the city manager to prepare a report of special assessments. Councilperson Bayless stated council should consider some type of special consideration for Mr. Stechschulte. It does not seem reasonable for him to pay for the same thing again. Councilperson Dumond advised that Mr. Stechschulte could come back to council. Councilperson Bayless encouraged Mr. Stechschulte to bring the situation back to council for consideration. Councilperson Runyan stated it was his understanding the motion was only a recommendation to look at what the property owner's special assessments would be. Councilperson Ockerman stated the residents need to know there is an appeal process and asked if they would be notified. Ms. Hitchcock advised after the property owners are notified, they have a 30-day right to appeal. Councilperson Ockerman stated he wants to make sure the property owner's know there is an appeal process. Ms. Hitchcock advised a letter would be sent to each property owner. Mayor Weaver advised the motion before council instructs the city manager to prepare a special assessment report for council.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Hornus, Bendall, Dumond, Bayless, Ockerman, Runyan.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

Mayor Weaver stated the information that council and the Downtown Development Authority received dated October 21, 1999 was a recap of the discussion that took place on October 15, 1999. He asked if anyone had any questions pertaining to the prepared information. Councilperson Ockerman asked if any changes could be made. He stated item five should be changed and suggested keeping the driveway behind city hall two-way instead of one-way to the north. This would prevent some of the car lights from shining into the residential homes. Councilperson Dumond advised that his suggestion made sense. Ms. Hitchcock advised item 10B was originally green but was changed to black because in five years it might be hard to match the exact color. Councilperson Bayless asked why wooden posts would be used for the street signs instead of metal posts for item six. Mr. Cook stated a final decision has not been made. Councilperson Bayless asked if the post would be a square and treated four by four. Mr. Cook advised the post used would be a treated six by four. Councilperson Bayless asked if the posts would hold up over time. Mr. Cook advised yes. Ms. Hitchcock advised the post being looked at was more decorative to blend in with the downtown area instead of having a standard metal post. Councilperson Ockerman asked if the lampposts were going to be single, double or both. Mr. Cook advised that double lamps would be used at the corners and single lamps would be located in the middle of the block. Mr. Spaniola advised it should be noted there is still ongoing discussion in the Downtown Development Authority regarding the Mack Street project. Mayor Weaver asked if it would be appropriate for someone from the Downtown Development Authority to make a motion to acknowledge acceptance and concurrence of the items listed in the letter received from Capital Consultants dated October 21, 1999. Dr. Billis advised he was leaving the meeting and if council wanted to go into session to make a motion then feel free to do so. He further advised he was not comfortable with having to make a decision on material he just received. Dr. Billis stated that seven or eight of the ten items were discussed at the meeting on October 15, 1999 and asked if anybody had asked if the four by six street signs were an additional cost. Mr. Cook advised the street sign costs were included in the participating cost figures. Mr. Spaniola asked when the next Downtown Development Authority meeting would be held. Mr. Graham advised the first Wednesday of November

but stated it appeared that Capital Consultants wanted an answer sooner than that. Mayor Weaver advised he sensed the Downtown Development Authority was not ready to make a formal motion and encouraged the Downtown Development Authority to take a look at the information at the next meeting. Ms. Yerian suggested the Downtown Development Authority could meet Tuesday or Wednesday night to review the information and make a decision. A decision was made for the Downtown Development Authority to meet Wednesday night at 5:30 p.m.

ADJOURN: Hornus moved, Dumond seconded to adjourn.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Bendall, Bayless, Runyan, Dumond, Hornus, Ockerman.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED Time was 9:07 p.m.

AVERY WEAVER, MAYOR

YVONNE F. LONG, CITY CLERK